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## Concert: Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Jeffrey Grogan

Cayenna Ponchione

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*"It is  
my plan  
to build  
a school  
of music  
second  
to none."*

—William  
Grant Egbert  
(1867–1928)  
Founder,  
Ithaca  
Conservatory  
of Music

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

ITHACA

# ITHACA COLLEGE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Jeffrey Grogan, conductor

Cayenna Ponchione, graduate conductor

Nabucco: Overture

Giuseppe Verdi  
(1813 – 1901)

Down A Country Lane

Aaron Copland  
(1900 – 1990)

Cayenna Ponchione, graduate conductor

Journey to the Eleventh Hour (1994)

Dana Wilson  
(b. 1946)

Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770 – 1827)

I. *Allegro vivace e con brio*

II. *Allegretto scherzando*

III. *Tempo di menuetto*

IV. *Allegro vivace*

Ford Hall  
Sunday, October 13, 2002  
3:00 p.m.



## PROGRAM NOTES

*Nabucco: Overture* In 1840, Giuseppe Verdi, having just suffered the loss of his wife, daughter and son over a three year period, vowed to never compose music again. Verdi's friend and manager of La Scala, Bartolomeo Merelli, pleaded with him to read text written by the famous librettist, Solera. In an autobiographical sketch, Verdi wrote the following:

"On my way [from Merelli's office] I felt a vague uneasiness, a great sadness, an anguish that swelled up in my heart! . . . And at home I threw the manuscript with a violent gesture on the table, opened itself and without my quite realizing it my eyes fixed on the page before me at one particular line: 'Va, pensiero, sull' ali dorate' (Go, thought, on golden wings). [These were the words which Verdi made into a great chorus and which the crowd lining the streets at his funeral sang fifty years later.] I glanced through the verses which followed and was deeply moved, particularly in that they almost paraphrased the Bible which I have always loved to read. I read a line, then another. Then firm in my resolution never to compose again, I forced myself to stop, closed the book, and went to bed. But oh! *Nabucco* kept running through my head, and sleep would not come. I got up, I read the libretto, not once but two, three times, so that by morning, it's fair to say, I knew Solera's libretto by heart."

Reluctantly, Verdi slowly composed *Nabucco*, completed in the autumn of 1841. The opera is based on the story of King Nebuchadnezzar, whose name is reduced to Nabucco for purposes of song. In Act I, he defeats the Jews at Jerusalem, blasphemes in their temple, and enslaves them in Babylon. There, overcome by success, he declares himself God and is knocked insane by a thunderbolt. In the scramble for power, Nabucco's illegitimate daughter, Abigaille, pushes aside her legitimate half sister, Fenena, who has lost the support of the important priests of Bel by declaring the Jewish God, Jehovah, to be supreme. Just as Abigaille is about to kill Fenena and all the Jews, Nabucco recovers his wits, vows to Jehovah to establish Judaism as the state religion, and with divine aid rights all wrongs.

The premiere took place on March 9, 1842 at La Scala. In the third act, in spite of a specific police prohibition against encores, the audience insisted that the chorus, 'Va, pensiero', should be sung again. The police in this case were right to worry, although, as so often happens when a mass sentiment is stirred, they could do nothing to control it. The chorus is sung by the Hebrews, captive in Babylon, as they dream of their native land. This struck a great chord in the hearts of the Italians who were under Austrian rule at the time. Rossini observed that 'Va, pensiero' is actually an aria sung by massed voices. The text by Solera was moving enough alone, but when sung it became for the time the perfect expression of a people's longing for freedom.

Word of the new opera *Nabucco* spread throughout Italy launching Verdi's career. *Nabucco Overture - Sinfonia* is not played as a prelude to the opera, but rather is a concert piece showcasing the themes from the opera. The complete 'Va, pensiero' chorus makes up the middle and bulk of the piece which is surrounded by fragments of other themes found throughout the opera.

*Down A Country Lane* Originally composed for piano in 1962, Copland arranged the piece for orchestra in 1965. At the time of the composition he was residing in Peekskill, New York and was undoubtedly influenced by the large maple and oak trees that overhang the quaint winding dirt roads of our backcountry. A delightfully simple yet colorful work, it is easy to be swept away by its aural illusions to a pastoral country scene.

*Journey to the Eleventh Hour* The "eleventh hour" usually refers to the penultimate moment – the last block of time for something to occur before the witching hour of midnight arrives. It suggests a dramatic urgency to achieve something. A journey, on the other hand, suggests motion but over a longer period of time and in a leisurely fashion. It is the tension between these two perceptions of time that are explored in this short piece. Sustained and languid passages alternate with driving passages (all constructed of patterns based on eleven pitches and beats), and – it turns out – even some of the rather static sections have an urgency to them, while driving sections often have a repetitive, static sense to them. In the end, a "journey" to the crucial moments of the "eleventh hour" creates an oxymoron. The work was written in 1994 with support from a fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts.

-Dana Wilson

The works of Dana Wilson have been commissioned and performed by such diverse ensembles as the Chicago Chamber Musicians, Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Buffalo Philharmonic, Memphis Symphony, Washington military bands, Netherlands Wind Ensemble, Syracuse Symphony, and Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra. He has received grants from, among others, the National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts, New York State Council for the Arts, Arts Midwest, and Meet the Composer. His compositions have been performed throughout the United States, Europe, and East Asia. They have received several awards, including the International Trumpet Guild First Prize, the Sudler International Composition Prize, and the Ostwald Composition Prize; are published by Boosey and Hawkes, Ludwig Music Publishers, and Dorn Publications; and can be heard on Klavier, Albany, Summit, Open Loop, Mark, Redwood, Musical Heritage Society, and Kosei



Recordings. Dana Wilson holds a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music, and is currently Charles A. Dana Professor of Music in the School of Music at Ithaca College. He is co-author of *Contemporary Choral Arranging*, published by Prentice Hall/Simon and Schuster, and has written articles on diverse musical subjects. He has been a Yaddo Fellow (at Yaddo, the artists' retreat in Saratoga Springs, New York), a Wye Fellow at the Aspen Institute, a Charles A. Dana Fellow, and a Fellow at the Society for Humanities, Cornell University.

*Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93* The chronicle of Beethoven's life is at best a tempestuous one riddled with health issues and difficult love affairs. The year 1812, in which both his Seventh and Eighth Symphonies were completed, was in this respect no different than the rest. His hearing continued to decline but as Goethe wrote in a letter to a friend that same year "He is...much to be pitied, as his hearing is leaving him, which perhaps mars the musical part of his nature less than the social." It was also in this year that the most infamous of Beethoven's letters was written, that to his 'Immortal Beloved.' According to Maynard Solomon, Antoine Brentano was to be the recipient of the unaddressed and perhaps most intimate letter Beethoven had ever written. A married woman, the couple could not realize their attraction and the letter was left unread for almost three decades. Surprisingly enough the Eighth Symphony holds none of the angst or sadness one would expect from such a tormented artist. Conversely it is a lighthearted work, following the vein of his other even numbered symphonies (six excluded) in its eighteenth-century classical style. A scant 26 minutes in length, Beethoven himself coined it the "Little Symphonie" Sir George Grove's explanation of its playful character is best described in his own words: "At this time in his life (forty-two) his love of fun and practical joking had increased so much on him as to become a habit; his letters are full of jokes; he bursts into horse-laughes on every occasion; makes the vilest puns, and bestows the most execrable nicknames – and all this the most when he was most happy. In fact, he had an express term of this state of things, *aufgeknopft* – i.e., unbuttoned – was his own word for it. And as what he has in his mind was bound to come out in his music, this comes out here more than anywhere else; indeed, the work might with propriety be called the Humorous Symphony[...]." Premiered on February 27th 1814, only two months after his more bombastic Seventh Symphony, it took time for it to gain popularity. Schumann stated as late as 1840 that it was still seldom performed in concerts. It was a full decade after the completion of his Eighth Symphony before he began work on the magnificent Ninth Symphony.

Program notes compiled by Cayenna Ponchione

# ITHACA COLLEGE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Jeffrey Grogan, conductor

Cayenna Ponchione, graduate conductor

## Violin I

Tamara Frieda  
Neil Fronheiser  
Amanda Gillespie  
Amanda Hockenberger  
Sara Hughes  
Julianna Methven\*  
Dan Sender

## Violin II

Laura Centonze  
Kiersten Cunningham  
Teresa Fiorenza  
Bill Hurley\*  
Maureen Pohlman  
Jackie Sica

## Viola

Suzanne Miller  
Laura Raposo  
Dana Rokosny\*  
Cassandra Stephenson

## Cello

Meredith Gollmer\*  
Leslie Lyons  
Kelly Nixon  
Christina Stripling

## Bass

Brian Krauss\*  
Ryan Reardon

## Flute

Leslie Kubica\*  
Jen Trimble

## Oboe

Aaron Jakubiec  
Jamie Strefeler\*

## Clarinet

Eric Callahan  
Byron Ford\*

## Bassoon

Stacey Bellott\*  
Amanda Ginovsky

## Horn

Carlie Kilgore  
Tyler Ogilvie  
Josh Phillips\*  
Jeff Rubin

## Trumpet

Andrew Benware  
Christopher Yee\*

## Trombone

Rob Bruns  
Tim Smith\*

## Bass Trombone

Eric Swanger

## Tuba

Christian Carichner

## Timpani

Mary Gardner

## Percussion

Nick Galante  
Taryn Lott\*  
Ryan Socrates

\* denotes principal

Personnel listed in alphabetical order to emphasize  
each member's personal contribution.